

history of my feelings — I shall write no more about myself.'

These two novels are therefore, in common with *Vivian Grey* of first-rate biographic significance, and *Contarini* especially is in some respects the most self-revealing of all Disraeli's works.

I am desirous of writing a book which shall be all truth: a work of which the passion, the thought, the action, and even the style, should spring from my own experience of feeling, from the meditations of my own intellect, from my own observation of incident, from, my own study of the genius of expression.

So the self-discovering hero tells us in the first chapter 'of the novel, and the author of course intended that we should apply the words to himself. Contarini's father is a Saxon nobleman in the service of a northern court; his mother was the daughter of a great Venetian house who had died in giving birth to him : he has thus, like Disraeli himself, though surrounded by the snows and forests of the North, the nervous temperament and glowing imagination of the South. We have seen something already of his sensitive and brooding childhood and the perpetual oscillation of his aims between the fields of art and of action : on the one hand ' his imaginary deeds of conquest, his heroic aspirations, his long dazzling dreams of fanciful adventure'; on the other, ' the first indication. of his predisposition (as a poet), the growing consciousness of his powers, his reveries, his loneliness, his doubts, his moody misery, his ignorance of his art, his failures, his despair.' * To feel the strong necessity of fame, and to be conscious that without intellectual excellence life must be insupportable, to feel all this with no simultaneous faith in your own power, these are moments of despondency for which no immortality can compensate.' While